

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EB-08 H-01 SS-15 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6104

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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GENEVA FOR AMBASSADOR CARTER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, ENRG, LI

SUBJECT: LIBERIAN REFINING COMPANY (LRC)

REF: (A) MONROVIA 5978, (B) STATE 281429, (C) MONROVIA 4397

1. SUMMARY. PRESIDENT TOLBERT SUMMONED THE CHARGE AUGUST 30 FOR ANOTHER AND SOMETIMES EMOTIONAL EXAMINATION OF THE LRC ISSUE. REITERATING COMMENTS HE HAS MADE PREVIOUSLY (REFTEL C), HE STRESSED THAT LIBERIAN NATIONAL POLICY IS OPPOSED TO EXPROPRIATION AND THAT SUN/DYNALECTRON ARE OPERATING IN BAD FAITH. HE SAID SUN/DYNALECTRON ARE TRYING TO BULLY AND BLACKMAIL LIBERIA WITH THE EX-PROPRIATION CHARGE AND BY GOING TO THE U.S. CONGRESS AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN AN EFFORT TO MAKE THIS CHARGE STICK. INVOKING HUMAN RIGHTS, SOVEREIGN RIGHTS AND NATIONAL SURVIVAL, HE SAID HE AS PRESIDENT HAD A RIGHT TO PROTECT LIBERIA'S NATIONAL WELL-BEING AND SUN/DYNALECTRON'S ACTIONS CAN DO NOTHING BUT HARM U.S.-LIBERIAN FRIENDSHIP. FINALLY, HE SAID HE HAD DECIDED TO WRITE PRESIDENT CARTER AND WOULD PROVIDE EMBASSY WITH A COPY

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AUGUST 31. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT TOLBERT REVIEWED THE LRC PROBLEM WITH THE CHARGE IN THE PRESENCE OF MINISTER OF PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS TOWNSEND, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER SHERMAN, ACTING MINISTER OF FINANCE PADMORE AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL MINIKON. STARTING THE MEETING OFF PADMORE

REVIEWED THE LATEST GOL OFFER (REFTEL A). HE ADDED THAT A TELEX IN THE LAST FEW DAYS FROM LIBERIA'S NEGOTIATOR INDICATED SUN/DYNALECTRON'S RESPONSE WAS NOT NECESSARILY FAVORABLE BUT WAS RECEIVED BY SUN/DYNALECTRON'S NEGOTIATORS FOR REFERENCE TO THEIR SUPERIORS. THE ONLY OTHER NEW INFORMATION PADMORE ADDED TO WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED IS THAT IN A RECENT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION THE FORMER MANAGER OF LRC HAD INDICATED TO AN EXPATRIATE EMPLOYEE HE SHOULD START LOOKING FOR ANOTHER JOB, THE INFERENCE BEING SUN/DYNALECTRON HAVE ALREADY MADE UP MIND ABOUT LRC.

3. AFTER PADMORE'S SUMMARY, PRESIDENT TOLBER SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT HIS PERSONAL VIEWS ON THE MATTER. HE WAS QUITE CLEARLY REACTING TO THE POINTS THE CHARGE HAD MADE TO PADMORE AUGUST 26 UNDER THE INSTRUCTIONS IN REFTEL B. PRESIDENT TOLBERT SEEMS INCREASINGLY TO BELIEVE THAT SUN/DYNALECTRON IS ACTING IN BAD FAITH FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES, AND HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT A SOVEREIGN STATE COULD NOT PERMIT ITSELF TO BE PUSHED AROUND BY A FOREIGN CORPORATION. HE SAID LIBERIA HAD NO INTENTION OF TAKING ADVANTAGE OF ANYONE AND THAT IN FACT HE HAD TOLD A SUN OFFICIAL (PRESUMABLY VICE PRESIDENT GLAZIER) THAT ONCE HE HAD DEALT WITH THE FINANCE MINISTRY IF HE FELT HE WAS NOT BEING GIVEN A FAIR SHAKE HE SHOULD FEEL FREE TO APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE QUICKLY REVIEWED THE CLOSENESS OF U.S.-LIBERIAN RELATIONS AND WONDERED WITH SADNESS HOW LIBERIA COULD BE TREATED LIKE THIS BY FRIENDS. NOTING THAT IF NOT RESOLVED THIS MATTER WOULD DOUBTLESS COLOR OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, TOLBERT WENT ON TO SAY THAT IF THE U.S. WANTED TO CUT OFF AID THAT WAS ITS BUSINESS BUT HE WOULD NOT BEG. HE CONCLUDED "LIBERIA CAN EXIST ON ROOTS." FINALLY, PRESIDENT TOLBERT SAID HE WOULD BE WRITING PRESIDENT CARTER AND WOULD SEEK EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN TRANSMITTING THIS CORRESPONDENCE BY THE FASTEST MEANS POSSIBLE.

4. COMMENT: WHILE PRESIDENT TOLBERT WOULD APPEAR TO BE ACTING HASTILY, THIS LATEST OUTBURST IS A REFLECTION OF THE MISTRUST BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES. HE ALSO APPEARS TO BE LOOKING FOR SOME SIGNAL OF USG UNDERSTANDING. HORAN

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